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| 1  WHOM DO YOU FEAR? PART II SERMON OUTLINE  12/17/23  SELECTED SCRIPTURES  INTRO:  Betrand Russell, famous philosopher and athiest  1927 address “Why I Am Not A Christian”  argued that religion/Christianity is primarily and mainly built upon fear.  Believed religion was invented to cope with fears like fear of death, fear of the unknown, etc.  He believed if you liberated people from belief in God = liberate them from fear  In fact, opposite has happened.  We live in anxiety and worry and fear like never before because we’ve lost what it means to “fear the Lord” | 2  It is precisely because we have abandoned the fear of the Lord that we become all the more fearful  Liberating society from belief in God only results in tyranny, chaos, moral degeneration, and fear  REVIEW:  Last week fear of man why it’s sinful  Fear of man = root issue of love/worship  Last week needs today to complete it  What does it mean to “fear the Lord?”  Maybe you’re confused: You hear commands from Scripture to “not fear” but then also the command to fear the Lord  You might also ask is “fear” the right word to use?  “revere”?  “respect”?  “awe”? |
| 3  But “fear” is still best term to use despite baggage  “revere” falls short = not overwhelmingly startingly reaction  “respect” falls short = strange response to God’s love  “awe” = better but still falls short because it’s usually in response to God’s transcendence and power, not His graciousness  You will see that the term “fear of the Lord” is the best term to use  Term = not punishment/condemnation  This fear = wonderful, delightful, joyful fear = tremble at who God is and what He has done for you.  To put it simply fear of the Lord = delight in the Lord  TRANSITION:  I want to show you that fearing the Lord consists of fearing Him as Creator and fearing Him as Redeemer and Father | 4  1. Fearing the Lord means fearing Him as your Creator  God = wholly other/transcendant  You are creature/He is Creator  David in contemplating this distinction said this Ps. 8:4  *“What is man that You remember him, And the son of man that You care for him?*  When you consider majesty of God = staggering thought  Illus: Space  one planet out of 8 – one solar system out of 3916 –  milky way galaxy out of 200 billion galaxies  (conservative estimate)  illus: Baby formation  Heidi’s ultrasound: pebble ---- human w/arms + legs, |
| 5  Ps. 139:13-14  “*For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.”*  Only logical explanation for creation = one powerful Creator behind all of this  If you personally encountered majesty of God = fall down as if dead like the apostle John in Revelation  Isaiah 6?  *“woe is me, for I am undone!”*  Lit. felt body was going to explode into million pieces  Judg. 13  Manoah found out and told his wife  *“We will surely die; for we have seen God”* | 6  Not to fear God = foolishness because animals naturally fear humans  Yet Ecc. 3:14  *“God has so worked that men should fear Him”*  Part of this “working” through creation  Because creation clearly testifies to splendor of God, rejecting it consequences are dire  Romans 1:18-20  *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, both His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”* |
| 7  Consequences for “suppressing the truth in unrighteousness” = giving sinners over to fornication, homosexuality and like sins, and a debased mind that produces all sorts of evil  Fear of the Lord as Creator ultimately humbles you and acts as divine axe to chop down your pride  Because you see you are like grasshopper in God’s sight  Job was hit with magnitude of God as Creator in Job 42 and said now that my eye has seen you  *“I reject myself and repent in dust and ashes”*  For unbeliever to encounter God as Creator of the universe = terrifying thing  Like Rev. 6  mountains and rocks to fall on them to hide them from  *“the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.”* | 8  Instead of fleeing from presence of God, believers fall down in worship in presence of God in worshipful adoration  TRANSITION:  Now to fear the Lord only because He is your Creator will only keep you face-down prostrate before Him  You must be lifted up to delight in Him as your redeemer.  That’s why you need to not only fear the Lord as Creator but also as your redeemer and Father  2. Fearing the Lord means fearing Him as your Redeemer and Father  To have fear of the Lord as Creator and not redeemer = similar to demon’s knowledge Jm. 2:19  They know that God is one = shudder  They can’t believer  Without knowledge of God as your redeemer = only left with dread at the end |
| 9  Not only = slave but also = friend  Not friend as you are equal to God, He’s still your Creator and master but like a friend He reveals things to only His most intimate relationships  Jn. 14:21  ***“****He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”*  When you come to know:  love of God through redemptive work of Jesus Christ  Adopted by God into His family  Showered you with His blessings  Your fear of Him is not punishment but a fear of offending His honor and glory  Illus: Like someone you know and respect: best friend | 10  Best friend loves you and you love best friend  Relationship = trust and intimacy  If you sin against him, you know he will always forgive you and love you  Because of that:  You fear offending him in and losing his trust by sinning  It’s like that with God  Our relationship with God = not like eggshells and then wrath  Fear = offending Him because He is so good to you  That’s what it’s like to know God as redeemer  Familial relationship = son/father  “Abba/Father!” |
| 11  When you sin against God, you don’t fear ultimate separation like unbeliever but fear that sin you committed might distant you from his warmth of enjoyed communion with God  Illus: Parents will always love you no matter what, but doesn’t mean there won’t be breaches in trust and closeness  Spurgeon:  “Holy fear leads us to dread anything which might cause our Father’s displeasure.”  John Calvin:  “Even if there was no hell, a sanctified fear would still shudder at offending him alone!”  Not enough to evict fear of man from your heart  He will only creep back in as long as there is room  Like all other sins, it is not enough to just put off old man and put on the new man | 12  Truth clearly seen = Ephesians 4:28  “*He who steals must steal no longer* (putting off sin); *but rather he must labor, performing with is own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need* (putting on righteousness).”  If you have fear of man dwelling inside your heart, no room for fear of man  Fear of the Lord is cure for the fear of man  So….  How do you *grow* in your fear of the Lord?  Start by recognizing that He is so good to you:  Jer. 33 |
| 13  *“And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me and by which they have transgressed against Me. And it will be to Me a name of joy, praise, and beauty before all the nations of the earth which will hear of all the good that I do for them, and they will be in dread and tremble because of all the good and all the peace that I make for it.”*  Impossible in old covenant system = permanently atone for sin  Impossible to make sinner completely clean before Lord  Constant atonement/Constant washing  Yet God spoke of day when they would no longer have to do that  He Himself will atone for them and cleanse them  Act of incredible mercy and grace: permanent solution | 14  In response, the redeemed will fear and tremble *because* of all the good that God will do for them.  He could have left you in your filth and sin, but He didn’t  Fear/goodness side by side  Hos. 3:5  “*Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek Yahweh their God and David their king; and they will come in dread to Yahweh and to His goodness in the last days.”*  Gen. 28:10-17  God confirms covenant with Jacob in dream  Reassure bless and increase Jacob  To never leave him/always present  fulfill good purposes |
| 15  In response:  *“Surely Yahweh is in this place, and I did not know it.” And he was afraid and said, “How fearsome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”*  Use of word fear is not negative type of fear but positive = overwhelmed by goodness of God  Not God’s people fear Him = God saves them = Then we don’t fear Him  God saves us *in order that* we fear Him  Another way you grow in fear of the Lord is to know how much God loves you  Essence fear of the Lord = love  Ps. 145:19-20  “*He will work out the desire of those who fear Him; He will hear their cry for help and He will save them. Yahweh keeps all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy.”* | 16  Even Shema, the greatest commandment Deut. 6 to “love the Lord” is preceded by command to “fear the Lord”  *“Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments, which Yahweh your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do it in the land where you are going over to possess it, so that you and your son and your grandson might fear Yahweh your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I am commanding you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.”*  But you might miss this connection because you may have misconstrued notion of what “love” is  Illus: “love” is thrown around  I “love” chocolate. I “love” my car  = nothing more than preference  But nature of love = defined by object |
| 17  1. I love my cat  2. I love my wife  3. I love my God  All three = true statements  But different type of love for each  Seriously wrong if the level of love I had for God is same as my cat or even my wife and vice versa  Delight and love that you should have for God should be a trembling delight  Nehemiah 1:11  *“O Lord, I beseech You, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your slave and the prayer of Your slaves who delight to fear Your name.”*  God’s love transcends all other loves  1 John 3:1  *“See how great a love the Father has given to us, that we would be called children of God; and we are.”* | 18  It can be struggle to imagine greater love than love for spouse  But Jesus said Matt. 10:37  *“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”*  Or to see it from the opposite angle,  Jesus said in Luke 14:26,  *“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”*  Jesus requiring this type of love because only proper response to such an amazing love  That’s why each of those words, “respect, reverence, and awe” just don’t quite fit the response that we should have towards God’s love |
| 19  To encounter living God in all His glory and goodness = we cannot contain ourselves  God is too beautiful and too glorious for our hearts to not respond in passionate delight  Fearing the Lord = isn’t about punishment or dread of someone more powerful than us  But if you are listening today and not have repented of your sins, trusted in Jesus as Lord and Savior,  God will be to you = dreadful judge  If Jesus has not taken wrath for your sins on cross  then  you will have to pay for your sins  Hebrews: Without faith, it is impossible to please God  Without Jesus’ death, there is no access to divine mercy-seat | 20  You should be afraid of dying in your sins  You should be afraid of flames of hell lick you up in hell forever in torment  God has given you a conscience to know right from wrong so that every time you sin, you fear consequences not from police, but from greatest judge over heaven and earth  But more you sin over time, more you suffocate your conscience to point where conscience vanishes  Turn to the Lord while conscience is still soft  Listen to your conscience pointing out your sins  Prov. 16:6  *“By the fear of the Lord one turns away from evil”*  Only at cross you see terrible extent of your sins and awesome magnitude of God’s love for you |
| 21  When you come to realize love of God despite Him being a holy God  only right response to His love = tremble before Him  “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  Oh, were you there when they crucified my Lord?  Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble”  Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  Pray | 22 |